

Support (A good list of recommendations for group practices)

<https://muxeresenmovimiento.wordpress.com/support/>

What About the Rapists? Anarchist approaches to crime and justice:

<https://dysophia.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Dys5-WhatAboutTheRapistsWeb2.pdf>

Supporting A Survivor Of Sexual Assault

<https://www.sproutdistro.com/catalog/zines/accountability-consent/supporting-survivor-sexual-assault>

Colonization and Decolonization Manual

<https://warriorpublications.wordpress.com/2011/02/10/colonization-and-decolonization-manual/>

The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love, Bell Hooks

Diné Masculinities: Conceptualizations and Reflections, Lloyd L. Lee

Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration, Robert Alexander Innes

As We Have Always Done Indigenous Freedom through Radical

Resistance, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson



INDIGENOUS ACTION
WWW.INDIGENOUSACTION.ORG

SMASHING CIS-HETEROPATRIARCHY IS CEREMONY

**BY INDIGENOUS
ACTION**



**A BASIC GUIDE TO STARTING
AN INDIGENOUS MEN'S,
TRANSMASC, & TWO-SPIRIT
TALKING & ACTION CIRCLE**

SMASHING CIS-HETEROPATRIARCHY IS CEREMONY

A Basic Guide to Starting an Indigenous Men's, Transmasc, & Two-Spirit Talking & Action Circle.

Indigenous Action - Spring 2023

www.indigenoussaction.org

The fight to end sexual assault and interpersonal/gender-based violence in our communities is our shared struggle. It will not end by creating more colonial laws & their enforcement or "awareness days" proclaimed by colonial rulers.

More police, more people in prison, and more laws addressing gender violence won't meaningfully address these matters because cis-heteropatriarchy is a pillar of the colonial capitalist state.

Cis-heteropatriarchy is a system of power based on the supremacy & dominance of cis-heterosexual men (Including Indigenous men) through the exploitation & oppression of women, Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer, Intersex, A-sexual, & Two Spirit folx.

This is particularly upheld through homophobia, transphobia & colonial gender norms historically imposed by the nation state, its laws & order. #MMIWGT2S is a systemic issue, meaning that Indigenous women, girls, trans, & two spirit people are not at increased risk of violence because of individual behaviors, but due to institutionalized systems of oppression.

Sexual violence has been used as a weapon of colonizers to wage genocide.

Christian missionaries violently imposed colonial gender roles on our communities. Tribal governments were established by the US with a strategy that suppressed the role of Indigenous women, trans, & two-spirit relatives.

The strategy of resource colonialism has been a strategy that has simultaneously attacked Indigenous womn's and queer bodies.

We cannot ignore the ways that colonizers have weaponized cis- and hetero-normativity & that this violence continues to this day.

Colonialism

The practice of invading other lands & territories, for the purpose of settlement and/or resource exploitation.

Neo-colonialism

Neocolonialism means a 'new colonialism'. It involves the use of state-funded Native government, business, & organizations to indirectly control Indigenous people.

Decolonization

Decolonization is the ending of colonialism and the liberation of the colonized.

*Some terms from various sources online including Warrior Publications, nonbinary.wiki, & Courage to Act: Addressing and Preventing Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions in Canada.

Resources (links also at www.indigenoussaction.org):

Taking The First Step: Suggestions To People Called Out For Abusive Behavior

<https://transformharm.org/taking-the-first-step-suggestions-to-people-called-out-for-abusive-behavior/>

Accounting For Ourselves (this link has good resources at the end of the document as well).

<https://crimethinc.com/2013/04/17/accounting-for-ourselves-breaking-the-im-passe-around-assault-and-abuse-in-anarchist-scenes> ☒

Navajo Nation Peacemaking Traditional Justice, 2005

Indigenous Feminism

Indigenous feminism is an intersectional theory and practice of feminism that focuses on decolonization, Indigenous sovereignty, and human rights for Indigenous womxn, queers, and their families. The focus is to empower Indigenous womxn and queers in the context of Indigenous cultural values and priorities, rather than mainstream, white, patriarchal ones.

Transformative & Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice is a community-based process without the state (cops, courts, prisons, government agencies etc) that focuses on the needs, safety, healing, and agency of the survivor(s) and what the perpetrator(s)/offender(s) can do to repair the harm they have caused. This may include some form of restitution, apologies/responsibility and other amends, and other actions to compensate those affected and to prevent the offender from causing future harm. All of these aspects are determined by the survivor and community of support they are working with through this process. See Survivor-Centric.

Transformative justice is a process (usually in tandem with Restorative Justice) where a perpetrator has the opportunity to transform their behaviors for healing, be held accountable (by a community) and take responsibility for the harm they have caused. It is a process that focuses on the rehabilitation of offenders through reconciliation with the survivor(s) and the community at large. It also focuses on transformation of the social conditions that perpetuate violence—systems of oppression and exploitation, domination, and state violence.

Many Indigenous communities such as Diné have practiced transformative and restorative justice since time-immemorial.

Basic guidelines for starting an Indigenous men's talking circle.

This is a living document prepared by Indigenous people who have experience with organizing talking and action groups, transformative/restorative justice processes, and community organizing. We view this as a living document that should be edited and amended as necessary. For any feedback, additional resources, etc. please email us at IAinfo@protonmail.com.

Why start a group?

Indigenous cis-men (hetero & queer), transmasculine, and two-spirits have a distinct responsibility to support our relations & hold our relatives, brothers, fathers, uncles, sons, & ourselves accountable. If our movements are to be truly liberatory we must not hesitate to engage in this critical struggle. This is all of our responsibility.

Basic steps on starting a group:

1. Establish intentions/purpose, expected outcomes, agreements, limitations, and accountability.

Be sure that the group is clear about, and has agreed on, expectations before the talking circle starts (though as noted in the examples section below this can and should be part of a group process). For example, is your group public or private? Are you going to have a cap on the number of participants? Determine how your Culture and Traditions are incorporated into your overall process and methodology. This should be contextual and perhaps unique to each group, it does not need to be set in stone. For example a Diné led circle will be different than a Lakota one, consider rotating the cultural protocols (as with facilitation) if necessary.

2. Roles.

a. Facilitation.

For new groups we recommend starting with an experienced facilitator or at least someone who is comfortable and confident in that role without being overbearing/dominating/judgmental etc. Co-facilitators are also a good practice, especially with larger groups. As your group gets going we recommend rotating the facilitation role each meeting. ☒ Though they do not necessarily have to be experienced, a facilitator should be aware of group dynamics, keep the conversation focused and moving forward, identify proposals/tasks/needs etc. ☒ We recommend the whole group participating in crafting an agenda and prompts. You can use the first meeting(s) to establish things or clarify them such as purpose, a list of prompts or topics for the group to address, specific issue, etc.

b. Note taking.

It's helpful to keep track of discussions particularly for tasks/actions. We do not recommend transcribing meetings but keeping notes of important topics/themes/issues/points/suggestions, etc. Be mindful if your group has agreements on confidentiality or there is a request for part of a discussion to be confidential or "off the record."

3. Logistics.

a. Schedule.

Does your group need to meet once a week? Once a month? Twice a month? Determine what's best for the purposes of your group. Having an ongoing group with a set schedule and time can be hard to manage but consistency with such efforts is important. ☒ We highly recommend being prepared to change the schedule to more frequent meetings especially if there's a serious issue that your group is addressing. Having agreements to prioritize and commit to fulfilling the group's purpose is important.

Victim Blaming

Victim blaming is when the default response to gender-based violence is assuming the fault lies with the victim/survivor. Victim blaming places the responsibility on the victim/survivor, rather than the person who caused the violence in the first place. For example, victim-blaming responses may sound like: "What were you wearing?" "How much did you have to drink?" "Are you sure it really happened?" These responses – often socially accepted- may come from post-secondary institutions, administrators, staff, peers, family, faculty, legal systems, and so on. Victim blaming is deeply rooted in rape culture and systemic discrimination.

Ableism

"Ableism is a set of beliefs or practices that devalue and discriminate against people with physical, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities and often rests on the assumption that disabled people need to be 'fixed' in one form or the other. Ableism is intertwined in our culture, due to many limiting beliefs about what disability does or does not mean, how able-bodied people learn to treat people with disabilities and how we are often not included at the table for key decisions." – Center for Disability Rights

Apologist

An apologist is someone who offers an argument in defense of something or someone controversial, in this context typically a perpetrator.

Feminist

A feminist is anyone who advocates to end sexism and sexist oppression. There are distinct waves of feminism and many Indigenous organizers consider feminism to be a colonial construct.

Retraumatization

Retraumatization occurs when someone re-experiences or re-lives a previous traumatic event.

Secondary Trauma

“[N]atural and consequential behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other (or client) and the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person” (Figley, 1995 as cited in Rauvola et al., 2019).

Survivor

We use the term survivor to refer to any individual who has experienced sexual or gender-based violence, whether or not a disclosure, informal complaint or formal complaint has been made. The term survivor is often interchanged with victim, which is often used as a legal term in the “criminal justice” system. Some individuals choose to identify with the term victim. An individual may use the term survivor as a way to reclaim power and/or to highlight the strength it took to survive such violence.

Survivor-Centric

A survivor-centric approach prioritizes the rights, needs, and wishes of those who have experienced campus gender-based violence first and foremost. Above all, survivor-centric protocols should prioritize placing the control and decision-making back into the hands of the harmed person so the response does not contribute to taking away further control from that person.

Trigger

“A stimulus that sets off a memory of a trauma or a specific portion of a traumatic experience” (SAMHSA, 2014). Survivors of gender-based violence may experience triggers at any time, for example, “a survivor attending a seminar hears a joke about rape” may trigger a trauma response such as flashbacks, anxiety, panic, flight, fight or freeze.

b. Time.

Schedule adequate time for meaningful discussion. This should be scaled based on the frequency of your meeting schedule. For example, groups that meet only once a month may require more time than ones that meet every week. This might also change depending on the topic or issue that your group is addressing. We’ve had sessions where we’ve had to schedule whole afternoons for meetings. If you’re meeting in a community space, the time of their availability is also a factor. We recommend as an agreement to establish that everyone’s time should be respected and honored. Starting meetings on time and ending them when intended could be necessary for those who are working multiple jobs, taking care of families, etc.

c. Location.

Is your group meeting in-person or virtually (or a mix of both?). In-person circles are much more impactful but if your group has special accessibility considerations and/or is spread out, plan accordingly and be mindful of the limitations and opportunities of meeting in-person vs online. For example, in-person meetings are more intimate and in our experience offer a material space where accountability/responsibility seems more rooted, while meeting virtually offers the opportunity to have a wider range of folks participate. Meeting virtually presents security considerations regarding surveillance depending on what platform you use as well. We recommend www.jitsi.org or Signal video rooms for the security minded and other platforms such as zoom (though free accounts are time limited) for ease of use/access. If you meet in-person, we recommend meeting in distraction free environments (so unless a cafe or busy community space has a quiet space, you might want to hold meetings elsewhere).

d. Outreach, public or private, and group size.

Creating a plan for outreach will depend on (1) whether your group is public or private and (2) how many participants are in the group. Private groups often outreach through word of mouth. These groups tend to be comprised of people familiar with each other and usually have some kind of basic process and vouching system to bring in new members. For example, “New group members are welcome but consensus should be made before they are brought in. It is up to the person making the invitation/proposal to vouch and explain why they should be part of the group.” While seemingly exclusionary, maintaining confidentiality, security culture, and perhaps other concerns such as proximity to known abusers etc, could be reasons for a more closed group. A public group can be a good way to connect with others if your community or personal circle is small. You will want to clarify for whom your group is for (and not for). For example, on our outreach for one group we stated, “This group is open to Indigenous cis-men, Transmasc, and Two-Spirit relatives.” You may also want to consider the capacity or size of the group. We recommend talking and action circles being no more than 12 people. While it is entirely possible to have larger groups (some up to 50) it becomes much more difficult to focus on specific matters and the time of your meetings will grow accordingly. For example, if your basic agenda is introductions and to share thoughts and experiences on a specific topic, with 10 participants each sharing for only 5 minutes you are already close to one hour of meeting time. If there’s lots of interest and limited capacity, encourage the start of another group! We could imagine clusters of these kinds of groups in our communities sharing information, waging or supporting actions, and being available as a resource if needed. Overall, outreach for a public group can be done with digital and print flyers. ☑Make sure you share the group's contact info (set up a dedicated email account if necessary. If you use a personal email it might be hard for the rest of the group to take on a role with communications).

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

An umbrella term that includes sexual violence and other forms of “use and abuse and control over another person” that are “perpetrated against someone based on their gender expression, gender identity, or perceived gender” Courage to Act: Glossary of Key Terms 8 (BCFED, 2018, as cited in Khan & Rowe, 2019, p. 10). Forms of gender-based violence include: physical violence; online violence/technology-facilitated violence; sexual violence including sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual exploitation; spiritual abuse; financial abuse; harassment including stalking; and emotional and psychological violence including putdowns, bullying, threats and intimidation.

Culturally Safe Approaches

Approaches that recognize and challenge unequal power relations between service providers and survivors by building equitable, two-way relationships characterized by respect, shared responsibility, and cultural exchange. Survivors must have their culture, values, and preferences taken into account in the provision of services (Government of Canada, 2021).

Consent Culture

A culture where consent is practiced and normalized in everyday interactions and activities. In a consent culture, survivors of gender-based violence are believed and people’s right to choice and autonomy are respected and valued in every aspect of their lives. Consent culture is often framed as an alternative to rape culture- a culture that upholds oppressive systems such as patriarchy, misogyny, white supremacy, colonialism, racism, etc. “A culture in which the prevailing narrative of sex is centered on mutual consent. It is a culture that does not force anyone into anything, respects bodily autonomy and is based on the belief that a person is always the best judge of their own wants and needs. Consent to any activity is ongoing, freely given, informed and enthusiastic” (Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children, 2019).

Intersectionality

A term coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality is the acknowledgement that an individual can occupy a number of political and social identities and that this has an impact on that individual. Those identities and social categorizations can be understood under racial, gender, sexual, religious, ability, class, and religious lines, to name a few. The overlap of any of these identities creates a complex system of discrimination where individuals face multiple oppressions.

Intergenerational Trauma

“[W]hen the effects of trauma are not resolved in one generation. When trauma is ignored and there is no support for dealing with it, the trauma will be passed from one generation to the next” (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 1999, as cited in Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004, p. 2).

Historical Trauma

Historical trauma is commonly referred to as the “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding spanning generations, which emanates from massive group trauma.”

Rape Culture

Rape culture is a culture in which sexual violence is treated as the norm and victims are blamed for their own assaults. It is “a society or environment whose prevailing social attitudes have the effect of normalizing or trivializing sexual assault and abuse.”

Heteronormativity

Heteronormativity is the assumption that everyone is straight. It's the idea that romantic and sexual relationships are always between one man and one woman. Heteronormativity assumes heterosexuality is the default sexual orientation, and the only normal or natural way to express sexuality and attraction.

It can be helpful to reach out to existing Indigenous support groups to let them know about your group so they can make announcements. Hit up pow-wows, table at events (just a table, banner, and some flyers and zines makes for one of the most effective ways to outreach). You can also start outreach with a sign-up sheet (virtual or physical) and when you have enough people committed to attending, plan your meeting from there.

4. Communications.

Internal communications are necessary for these kinds of efforts. Someone running late to a meeting? Something needs to be rescheduled at the last minute? What might work best for your group can easily be established at your first meeting(s) as an agenda item. Consider security and confidentiality. We recommend starting a Signal group (providing everyone has access to the app). We do not recommend facebook groups. We also recommend establishing an agreement around “checking-in with each other.” This is just basic direct communication either one on one or in a group setting. Creating a process for direct communication upfront can help foster good group dynamics. That way when an issue might arise between group participants the request to “check-in” with them is part of the group’s culture. For example, one participant was triggered by something another one said during a circle session and doesn’t feel that the entire group needs to be involved in the matter.

5. Action.

Actions speak louder than words. What material actions will be taken by your group? What commitments can be made? A helpful way to approach this in our experience is to constantly think about what is being said and how action can be taken. Is there a task? Is there something that can be turned into a proposal? It's also important not to force actions as in some instances the talking-through is the healing needed. Our cultures are our first frameworks for organizing and action. Our cultural teachings can provide powerful guidance for creating a space that respects and honors vulnerability, trust, responsibility, and accountability. Recognize that each person coming into the circle are at different points in their lives spiritually, mentally, politically etc. Make sure there is plenty of room to support that growth. Be open to learn as you go, especially for those in heavily displaced/colonized areas.

Considerations:

Militancy

Militancy is a commitment to take action through the means of ideological affinity. It functions to resist co-optation of anarchism and social movements into a watered down, neoliberal agenda.

Commitment requires a level of self-awareness as to only commit to that which can be followed through. Those engaging in the actions have more decision making power in an attempt to prioritize on the ground experience over bourgeois anarchism, without requiring us to commit beyond personal capacity, recognizing level of capacity can fluctuate.

Follow through and follow-up.

We are addressing and confronting serious matters in our communities. Think about your commitment to the effort and what your personal capacity is. Being reliable means being consistent and showing up especially when the matters are most challenging.

Survivor-centric

A survivor-centered approach seeks to empower survivors by prioritizing their rights, safety, well-being, needs and wishes.

Consent

Consent is an everyday practice that is required before engaging in different types of interactions, including sexual relations. Consent must be voluntarily given by all parties. Consent must be informed, on-going, enthusiastic, withdrawn at any time, specific and is required before each interaction. It is important to note that any type of sexual activity without consent is sexualized violence.

Perpetrator

"A perpetrator is a person, group, or institution that directly inflicts, supports and condones violence or other abuse against a person or a group of persons. Perpetrators are in a position of real or perceived power, decision-making and/ or authority and can thus exert control over their victims" (PSI, 2016, as cited in Learning Network, n.d.)

Enabling

Enabling is a process where a person (i.e., the enabler) supports/conceals the harmful or problematic behavior in another person (enabled).

Gaslighting

☒ Gaslighting is the act of psychologically manipulating someone into questioning their own sanity or powers of reasoning.

Two-Spirit

Two-Spirit is a term used within some Indigenous communities (Note: not all Indigenous Peoples use this term and there are issues of appropriation to address), encompassing cultural, spiritual, sexual and gender identity. The term reflects complex Indigenous understandings of gender roles, spirituality, and the long history of sexual and gender diversity in Indigenous cultures.

Transmasculine

Transmasculine, sometimes abbreviated to transmasc, is an umbrella term that describes a transgender person (generally one who was assigned female at birth), and whose gender is masculine and/or who express themselves in a masculine way. Transmasculine people feel a connection with masculinity, but do not always identify as male.

Nonbinary

Nonbinary (also spelled non-binary) means any gender identity that is not strictly male or female all the time, and so does not fit within the gender binary. For some people, nonbinary is as specific as they want to get about labeling their gender. For others, they call themselves a more specific gender identity under the nonbinary umbrella. Many people who call themselves nonbinary also consider themselves genderqueer. However, the terms have different meanings and connotations: genderqueer means any gender identity or expression which is, itself, queer.

Toxic masculinity

Toxic masculinity is a “cultural concept of manliness that glorifies stoicism, strength, virility, and dominance, and that is socially maladaptive or harmful to mental health: Men and women both suffer when toxic masculinity perpetuates expectations that are restrictive and traumatizing.”

It will be challenging.

Be prepared for laughs and tears. We carry many wounds with us and part of the intention of these circles is foremost about healing. Are you prepared to address these matters with your relative(s)? Your best friend? The weight of someone sharing their personal experience with sexual abuse can be very challenging. Make sure you have necessary resources available and are able to respond. It will be very challenging but it can also be immensely rewarding.

Be open, not defensive.

Given the nature of the matters your group is meeting about, you should be prepared to engage in accountability/responsibility processes within and/or outside of the group.

You're essentially creating an affinity group. Be mindful of who is “in” and who is “out.” This does not mean creating a crew to protect and defend your “bros.” It means being open, honest, and readily willing to engage (without becoming defensive) in the processes necessary to address gender-based violences of external and internal colonialism and cis-heteropatriarchy.

It can be challenging to balance transparency with confidentiality and security so consider these dynamics early on and be prepared for more critique than encouragement.

Take risks.

Be creative and open to experiment to figure things out. We are all constantly in a process of learning and growing. These matters are not to be taken lightly yet we can't wait around until the conditions are perfect to organize. Initially (and perhaps throughout) the formation of your effort may be messy and you feel like you're unsure of what you are doing. That's okay and should be embraced so long as it doesn't foster unhealthy behaviors and patterns.

Be prepared.

Healing takes time but immediate action is also necessary. The deeper the wounds and the more people involved the more time it will take for healing to occur. Though immediate interventions will be necessary to act on, we also cannot rush any processes if they are to be meaningful. For example, if abuse has occurred in your community, you and/or your group may be called upon or be able to actively engage in providing support and asserting boundaries etc. Being prepared for this by having a basic plan or response is necessary.

New people/drop-offs.

Determine how (and when or if even) to incorporate new people into the group. If a group has been meeting for some time it might be difficult to bring them up to date on the discussions and so forth. Having good notes and materials/resources available can help them be brought into the group much more fluidly. ☒ You may also want to consider the inevitability that some people will stop showing up or communicating with your group. For example one of our groups had the agreement that if someone missed a meeting and didn't communicate we'd "check-in" with them. If they missed more than two meetings without communicating we'd remove them from the internal communications group but would be open to them coming back with discussion.

Temporary Circle

Groups such as these can also be initiated to address a specific issue(s) in your community, in that instance it may be that commitments are made for a range of time with a clear goal that once accomplished or established, the group would dissolve.

- Support survivor's healing & ensure access to necessary services.
- Teach young boys & men about consent and honoring boundaries.
- Confront abusive humor and language.
- Check machismo, manarchism, mansplaining, and other shit actions/behaviors.
- Recognize that abuse can not only be physical but also spiritual, emotional psychological, verbal, economic, indirect & internalized.
- Recognize that gender-based violence can be a personal or individual issue and it is also a breakdown in our communities & cultures.
- Work towards total abolition of rape culture.

Glossary:

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a social system in which men are the primary authority figures central to social organization, political leadership, moral authority, and control of property, and where male figures hold authority over womn, queers and children.

Cis

Cis is short for cisgender, which refers to when a person's gender identity corresponds to their sex as assigned at birth. Cisgender is the opposite of transgender.

Cis-heteropatriarchy

Cis-heteropatriarchy is a system of power based on the supremacy & dominance of cis-heterosexual men (Including Indigenous men) through the exploitation & oppression of women, Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer, Intersex, A-sexual, & Two Spirit folx. This is particularly upheld through homophobia, transphobia & colonial gender norms historically imposed by the nation state, its laws and order.

- Step up/step back. Be aware of who is speaking and who is not. Make sure there's room for everyone's voices.
- Don't use your participation in this group as a badge.
- Be careful not to "out" others and be particularly mindful about how you might out someone when you are outside this space.
- All emotions are welcome. Be aware that your emotions may impact others based on their experiences.
- Do not come to this space if you are intoxicated or using any substance that you know will impair your judgment in a way that could create a negative experience of this space for others.
- No cops.

Some action steps:

- Strengthen ability to identify emotions, name them and talk about them outloud.
- Honor consent. Consent occurs when one person voluntarily agrees to the proposal or desires of another.
- Honor & respect (and assist in reinforcing) personal boundaries. Learn, listen, and build understandings about and directly confront the root-causes of gender-based violence such as cis-heteropatriarchy, historical trauma, colonialism, white supremacy, capitalism, internalized oppression, and eco-cide.
- Challenge sexist, homophobic, and transphobic behavior in all its forms. Honor two-spirit and trans relatives.
- Practice survivor-centricism and provide fierce care, sensitivity, compassion, understanding & other means of support.
- Respect survivor autonomy.
- Don't perpetuate victim-blaming
- Don't perpetuate or enable apologist behaviors.
- Engage in transformative and restorative justice processes.

Invite guest speakers/presenters.

Turning your talking/action circle into a workshop at times can be helpful for a lot of reasons especially if you're new to organizing. There are a range of people who have experiences (don't just go to the "professional" non-profits, as those with wisdom and experience in your community can be much more capable).

Direct Action

Direct Action is a form of action based on horizontalism in which individuals, groups and social movements do not appeal to oppressive interests & institutions to get something done but do it themselves according to their own needs and decisions. Direct action, the spirit of revolt, is the struggle lived in the day-to-day; it is the permanent assault against the colonizers/oppressors.

Example of group "purpose" statement:

The purpose of this group is to directly address how cis-heteropatriarchy impacts our lives, organizing, & movement spaces for healing so we can hold ourselves and each other accountable and be more responsible to our communities. The proposal is for four initial meetings to deepen our understandings, establish responsibility and accountability processes as needed, and start work on a framework that we can be accountable to and that could be shared with other community spaces.

Talking/Action Circle agenda example:

Note: Facilitator(s) should be determined ahead of time. Notetaker role can be established during meeting if needed.

- 1) Opening prayer/intention setting
- 2) Introductions/Check-in
- 3) Last Meeting Review/Recap/Updates
- 4) Topical Discussion. For example: "What are abuse/abuser enabling behaviors and how do we address them?"
- 5) Proposed Agenda & Roles (facilitator and note taker) for Next Meeting
- 6) Open Discussion (if time)
- 7) Check-out/closing prayer (if appropriate)

Topics/discussion prompt examples:

We recommend starting your first meeting off with introductions and this question: What would you like to get out of this group?

Other questions/prompts:

How is masculinity defined by our cultures?

How do we end cis-heteropatriarchy in our personal lives, projects, and communities?

What is cis-male privilege and toxic masculinity?

What are community based responses (no cops or state) to abuse and abusive behavior?

How do we address abusive elders and spiritual and ceremonial knowledge keepers?

What does Indigenous accountability look like?

How did we learn about our understandings of gender through our cultural context?

How do we respond to conflicting reports on accountability and abusers?

How do we practice, uphold, and teach consent?

What is transformative and restorative justice?

How do you know when a process is done?

What kinds of community infrastructure can we create to support more safety, transparency, sustainability, care and connection (e.g. a network of community safe houses that those in danger can use, an abundance of community members who are skilled at leading interventions to violence)?

What are the skills we need to be able to prevent, respond to, heal from, and take accountability for harmful, violent and abusive behaviors?

What do survivors and people who have caused harm need?

Why do survivors and people who have caused harm have so few options in our community?

What are some of the harmful ways that we treat each other that help set the stage for violence and abuse, and how can we change this?

Example agreements:

- Take risks. No judgment, what is said here stays here.
- Practice security culture and respect confidentiality.
- Consensus based. Decisions will be made based without top-down/majority rule upholding cultural frameworks.
- Respect each other's time.
- Be accountable to each other.
- We are entering into this circle in good faith (no one will attack someone for messing up but we will hold you accountable).
- Provide constructive responses.
- Attach actions to discussions (praxis to theory etc).
- Break it down. Don't overload people with jargon, make sure we present complex issues accessibly. Don't be afraid to mess up with language.
- No experts required. You don't have to be an expert, but try to know your shit.
- This is not an open meeting. Referrals only from someone already here. Group has to have consensus on their participant.
- If this is your first meeting, please observe rather than participate.
- Communicate if you can't make a meeting.